2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1953 MM1 Aden MM1

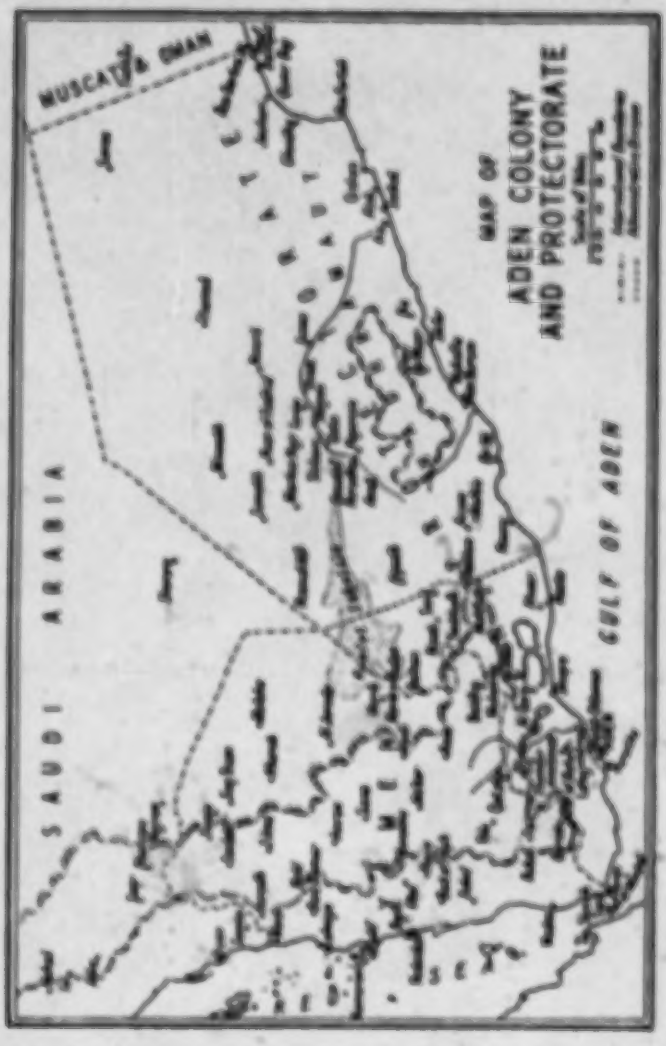
Foreword

Now at last Hickinbotham occupied a position in which the scope of his responsibilities included the Aden Protectorate as well as the Colony of Aden, for as Governor and Commander-in-Chief he was Governor of the Protectorate as well as Governor of the Colony. It has been thought by some that the term "Governor of the Aden Protectorate" is a misnomer, for it is not the policy of the British Government to govern the Protectorate directly, but to leave the control of its internal affairs to the local Arab Rulers in treaty relations with Her Majesty's Government. Under these treaties the British Government are bound to give the Rulers protection against external attack, and through the Governor of Aden the Rulers also receive, when necessary, assistance in preserving internal security and also advice and financial help. The Colony of Aden is a small, mainly urban, territory of about 75 square miles: the Protectorate is a largely mountainous and thinly populated area with comparatively small fertile cultivable parts and is about the same size as the United Kingdom. The role of the Governor in the Protectorate thus differs fundamentally from his position in the Colony, where he is the head of a direct administration, and the problems with which he has to deal in the two areas are very different.

The Arabs of the Protectorate tribes made a natural appeal to Hickinbotham, as they have done to many other British officers and others whose work has brought them into contact with them and who can understand their outlook on life. In this book he has given a fascinating account of the Protectorate and its people based on practical sympathy and intimate knowledge, as well as an interesting description of Aden Colony and his experience in it in successive capacities. Sir Tom's position as Governor of the Aden Colony and Protectorate also necessitated his playing an active part in dealing with the question of British relations with the Yemen, the independent Arab Kingdom which lies to the north of the western part of the Protectorate, and his book includes informative chapters about this troublesome problem.

It is a pleasure to me to commend this work to all those who seek reliable information about this part of the world and

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MMI Aden MMI



2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

narrow confines of the rocky headland on which Aden lies into the interior of the Protectorate; a land of hills and deserts and of wild and warlike people as lovable as they are childlike and wayward. I have met many people who have passed through Aden and they have all disliked it, while at the same time I have met almost as many people who have lived there and they have all spoken with affection of the place. Arabia is a hard mistress who conquers slowly but, having conquered, never, never relaxes her hold, nor does the victim wish for release.

The Colony of Aden, as it is known today, it was called the Settlement when I first went there as a Government servant, is quite a small area only 75 square miles in extent. In appearance it resembles a lobster's claw, a maimed lobster, with one half of the claw shorter than the other. The claw is open and between the two halves lies the harbour. On one side of the harbour is the peninsula of Aden proper, and on the other the peninsula of Little Aden, now re-named Bureikha—just two promontories jutting out into the Gulf of Aden. The one on which the town of Aden stands is connected to the mainland by a narrow isthmus, the other is almost part of the mainland. Both these promontories are hilly and are connected to each other by a narrow strip of plain running round the northern side of the harbour from Little Aden, widening considerably to include the town of Sheikh Othman and the village of Imad and eventually reaching the sea again at the Khormaksar beach some eight miles to the east of Aden town. The boundary of the Colony has been demarcated and has not been in dispute for many years. The island of Perim, which lies at the bottom end of the Red Sea, is part of the Colony, why, precisely, I have never been able to understand. Perim was at one time a relatively important coaling station, with a garrison of Indian Army troops, but now that coal has been superseded by oil it is deserted, except for the personnel of the two important lighthouses, a few fishermen, and a detachment of Armed Police from the Colony Police Force.

The main commercial centre of the Colony lies in the midst of the old volcano and is appropriately called "Crater". The trading and maritime suburbs of Tawahi (Steamer Point to

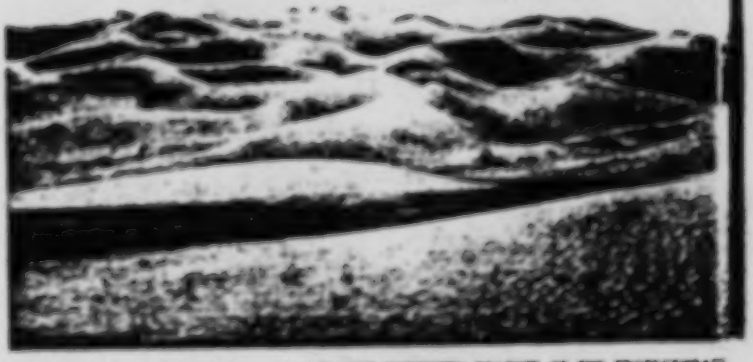
2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
1958 MM1 Aden MM1

361
• 133 passengers from ships) and Ma'alla are built on the northern and western slopes of Jebel Shamsan, the highest peak of the volcanic range of hills surrounding Crater. Jebel Shamsan is quite a presentable hill, for it is just over 1,700 ft. in height and was at one time adorned with a signal station.

361 The isthmus which joins Aden to the mainland is called
133 Khormaksar and is as flat as the proverbial pancake. During
132 the monsoon winds of summer it is a hellish place of drifting
508 sand and it is here that the Royal Air Force have their station;
707 the military and civil airport are also here. Close by the airport are the houses of the more senior civil and military officials
361 and a few ordinary folk, who are, on the whole, much better
647 paid than the officials, but of course not nearly so important.
648 Originally there were only two rows of houses, one of brown houses and the other of white houses, and since they were inhabited mainly by officials, they were, not unnaturally, known as Downing Street and Whitehall. Now there are rows and rows of houses, all variations of the usual colonial box theme in architecture, incredibly ugly but reasonably comfortable, but I am glad to say Whitehall and Downing Street are still the really fashionable roads.

361 At the northern and land ward end of the isthmus there is the
351 town of Sheikh Othman with its pleasant gardens so well known to many tourists. Sheikh Othman was also, until quite recently, well known in a less desirable way to visitors and residents alike, but in modern times morals seem to have improved, and while the gardens have been enlarged, the other
361 attractions have been reduced. The town was not acquired by
648 any splendid feat of arms, but by a purely commercial trans-
175 action. It was bought from the Sultan of Lahej in 1882. Aden, on the other hand, was invested in 1839 by an armed expedition from India, carried in ships of the Indian Navy. The reason for this expedition is said to have been to punish an outrage which had occurred when the crew of an English ship wrecked on the coast near Aden were maltreated. In point of fact the probabilities are that the reason for our somewhat drastic action was because we wished to control the only good harbour between India and Egypt and use it as a coaling station

THE AUDHALI ESCARPMENT



[facing p. 19]

Aden

Just two sentences, but very revealing. What business was it of mine; what indeed? It was precisely the answer I should have given myself if I had been asked by a stranger a similar question on any day when I was feeling a trifle irritable. Also it was the exact opposite of the type of answer I should have received from an Indian, and it was then that I began to realise that the Arabs were fundamentally different from the majority of Asiatics I had met up to that time.

My first real trip into the Protectorate came in 1932 when I drove to Dhala, the capital of the Amirate of the same name. Dhala, which continues to figure rather largely in the daily Press in this country as the result of Yemeni incursions into the area, is a small, rather uninteresting and rather sinister-looking town of dirty grey houses which climb up the side of a hill. The Dhala plateau is about 4,500 ft. high and is surrounded by hill features, the finest of which is Jebel Jihaf, a magnificent massif 8,000 ft. high. The town is but a few miles from the Yemen border and raiding by the Yemen was by no means uncommon even in those days.

I stayed in the old castle which overlooks the town and crowns the hill, and well I remember having to leave the car and walk the last few hundred feet from where the road ended, up the steep footpath to the castle entrance. My luggage and that of my companion was unloaded by my servants, and the problem of carrying it up the hill was solved by a total stranger who called rather peremptorily to a half-dozen dreary passers-by, who I remember noticing had long side curls, not unlike the present-day Teddy boys. These dismal-looking fellows stopped without protest and at once seized the baggage and bore it off up the hill. When I reached the top myself and had exchanged preliminary courtesies with the Amir's representative, I inquired how much I should give the bearers, what amount would be a suitable reward for their labour. I was young and I had not been among the people of the Protectorate before and was, therefore, inexperienced in these matters. The Amir's representative looked surprised.

"Nothing," he said.

"But I must," said I.

Aden

fascinated at a low rather disagreeable ridge at the end of the runway until it had passed underneath the aeroplane, or closed his eyes until he hoped that it had, depending entirely on his temperament. The rest of the journey was uneventful, and on arrival at Khormaksar, Macfadyen said to Portal:

"You came off very quickly, Sir."

"Yes, I hit something halfway down the runway, found myself in the air and thought I had better try and stay there," was the reply with a smile. He had stayed there, all was well, and so ended my first visit to the Audhali country.

The foregoing is just a preliminary introduction to the Protectorate and the independent people that live there, but I am afraid for the real understanding of much that I have got to say I shall have to give a more detailed description of the area.

On the south the Protectorate is bounded by the sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, and it stretches from the rocky outcrop of small hills at Sheikh Said in the south-west corner of Arabia opposite to the island of Perim, some 740 miles to the East to Ras Darbat Ali where begins the territory of His Highness the Sultan of Muscat and Oman. The coast, except for the first 150 miles, is rugged with mountains rising steeply within a few miles of the beach; in places they rise abruptly from the sea, and for the most part, to use a nautical term, the coast is "steep to". Where the exception occurs is in the immediate neighbourhood of Aden itself, which is 100 miles from Sheikh Said and it is here that the coastal plain reaches its greatest depth of approximately 30 miles.

The next of the frontiers which can be quickly and easily described is that between the Protectorate and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. It is a straight line drawn from Ras Darbat Ali at right angles to the coast in a northerly direction up into the Ruba al Khali or "Empty Quarter", the great central desert of Arabia. Unfortunately the Ruba al Khali is empty no longer for of recent years it has been rather overfull of oil prospectors, most of whom are American, but I shall refer to this later. At latitude 19°, the most northerly point of this frontier, there meet the lands of the Protectorate, the territory of Muscat and Oman and the territory claimed by His Majesty

interested that trespassers would be dealt with in an appropriate manner; as indeed they were in 1955, as we shall see.

This northern frontier follows very closely the territorial limits of the bedouin tribes, who are based on the Aden Protectorate, rather I should say, it follows the limits of their home grazing areas, for they are great travellers and wander far up into Saudi Arabia when scarcity of grazing forces them to take their herds of camels farther and farther afield; just as the Saudi Arabian tribes came south into the Protectorate when their own grazing has suffered from lack of rain. One often hears a lot of nonsense about being as free as the Arab of the desert. The Arab of the desert is no more free than the city worker who has to catch the 7.30 a.m., or whatever train it may be, to London, on five days of the week. The Arab must go where God has willed the rain to fall and the grass and other herbage to grow, otherwise he and his flock will die; he is not free to wander at will, he is bound, inexorably bound to follow the rain.

Another advantage of this line is that it follows generally, but not exactly, the southern limits of the great sand dunes of the Ruba-al-Khali, dunes which are clearly defined and which rise in places to several hundred feet, almost one could say a natural frontier. Lastly, it is the limit of our effective control and although it is not ideal, it is practical and definite and not subject to yet another conference.

So much for the limits of the Protectorate, and now I must correct a misapprehension which seems to be fairly general with regard to its size. Many people in this country are under the impression that the Aden Protectorate is a small area approximating in size to that of one of the larger English counties; in fact, of course, it is nearly twenty-five per cent. larger than the whole of the United Kingdom including Northern Ireland. In the west it is predominantly hilly, once the coastal plain is crossed, and the average height of the territory is some 3,500 ft., that is very nearly as high as Snowdon. The mountain ranges run east and west and are separated by plains and plateaus, each successive range being higher than the last until, on the line of Yafa and the Audhali country, the mountains reach a

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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A 133

maximum height of 8,000 ft., and the plains range in height from that of Dhala in the west, which is 4,500 ft., to that of the Audhali plateau in the centre, which is 6,750 ft. Thereafter the mountains and plains decrease in height the farther north they go until nothing remains but the great central Arabian desert, the Ruba-al-Khali with an average height of 2,500 ft.

Over in the east the coastal plain rapidly gives way to the great Plateau of the Jöl, a tableland deeply cut by rifts and valleys, the greatest of which is the famous Wadi Hadhramaut in the north. Thereafter the tableland ends abruptly and then begins the northern plain which runs up to the southern limits of the great sand dunes of the central desert.

A 175

The full history of South-west Arabia, that is, of the Aden Protectorate and the Kingdom of the Yemen, has never been written and the travellers' tales of the Aden Protectorate and the historical records that do exist of the early history of the Yemen give no more than a glimpse of a period of history or of the authors' immediate surroundings. I do not propose to attempt to remedy this deficiency, but I must, for the proper understanding of my subject, give a brief historical outline of the events which led to the coming into existence of the Aden Protectorate in the form in which it was in 1931 when I first came to have personal acquaintance with that fascinating country. There has been no fundamental change in the form of the Protectorate since then, although as we shall see later, there has, of recent years, been considerable political and economic development.

X 175 648 643

At about the time that these islands of ours were being conquered for the last time in their history by William the Norman, the Imam of the Yemen had overrun much of what is now the Western Aden Protectorate and was in effective control of the tribes between Lahej, Aden's near neighbour, and Loder the capital of the Audhali Sultanate. The Imam was not left in possession for very long, and the records show that in the latter half of the eleventh century the Abdalis of Lahej and the other tribes more remote from the Yemen border broke away from the Imamic control and once again became

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2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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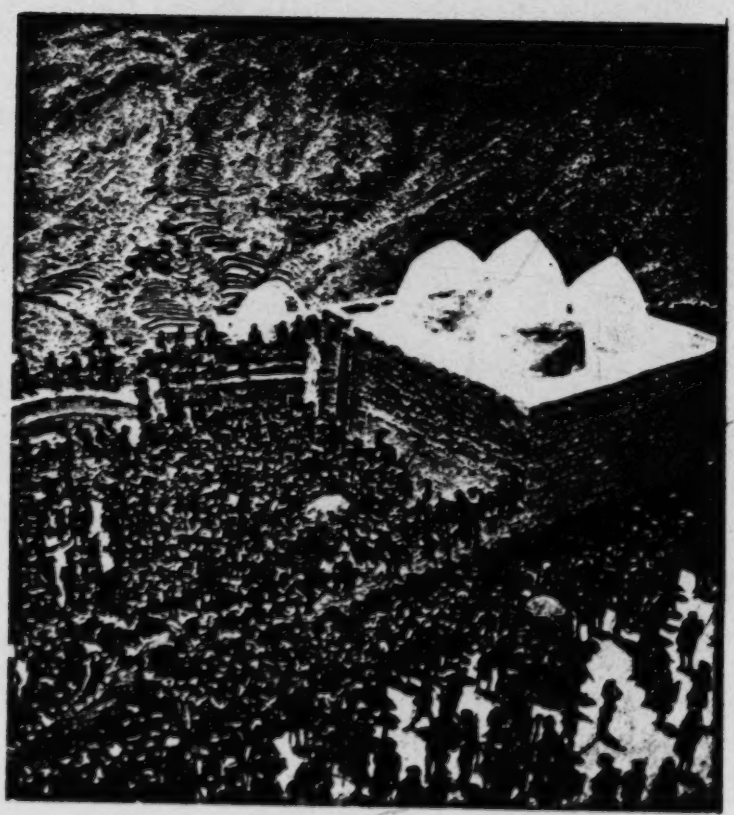

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AL QARA—TRIBESMEN SWARMING ROUND THE MOSQUE AFTER OUR ARRIVAL

[facing p. 131]

2: Hickinbotham G-4, 5 (ca. 1931-ca. 1957)
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Government Guard Post above the headworks of the Bana canal system, which irrigates the Western half of the plain and makes possible the valuable cotton crop.

The next day, leaving the motor transport on the flat ground below the Government Guard Post and taking to horses, camels or donkeys or our feet, as we felt inclined, we moved into the hills. My friend started on a horse but rather abruptly parting company with the animal he took to a camel the next day, but finding it no easier to keep his seat and rather farther to fall, he changed to a donkey on the third day. However, he was no more successful with the ass and he then walked without further misadventure.

Personally, I have always preferred to ride a donkey, which though not a very dignified proceeding was one which experience had taught me, especially in hilly country, was the most likely to get me to my destination in one piece and with the least fatigue. The Sultan had sent his own donkey for my use and I rode the animal there and back, except on the passes and on Al Qara hill itself, without mishap. The baggage travelled on camels and the two passes we had to negotiate on this journey tried severely even these hardy animals accustomed as they were to stony wadis and rocky mountain paths. For the greater part of the time we travelled along the beds of the steep-sided mountain valleys, dry for most of the way, but in places a stream of clean fresh water rose unexpectedly to the surface and after flowing for a mile or so over the stony bed of the valley vanished underground as abruptly as it had appeared. The water was crystal clear and delightfully cool and looked most refreshing, but our doctor had warned us most strictly that we must on no account drink it for fear of infection with all sorts of dreadful diseases and must rely solely for drinking on the water we carried with us on the baggage animals.

The Sultan had gone on ahead of us to prepare for our arrival at Al Qara and had left his eldest son, Sultan Muhammed, to act as our escort. Sultan Muhammed led the cavalcade on a horse with a motley assortment of tribesmen running at his stirrup, while I followed on my donkey with an ex-Jemadar of the Aden Police as my companion. He rode

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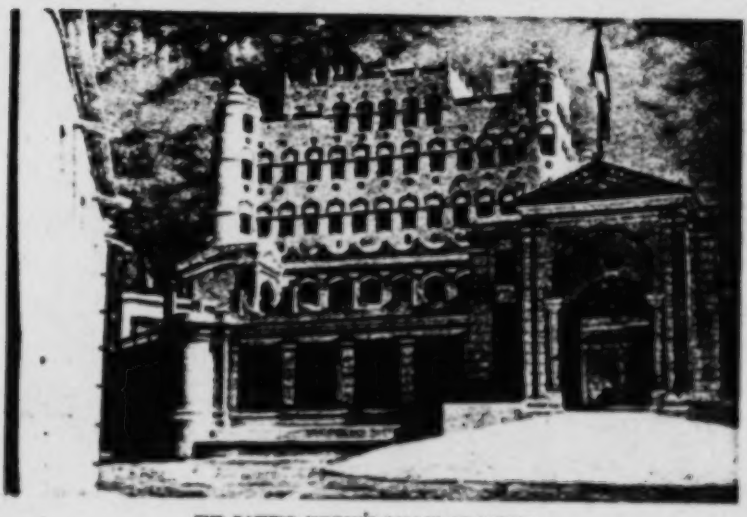
THE WELL BELOW A HADHRAMI BEDOUIN LEGION POST IN THE NORTHERN DESERT



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THE KATHIRI SULTAN'S PALACE AT SAIYUN

[facing p. 146]

CHAPTER EIGHT

Protectorate Development

THE people of all the States of the Protectorate are, for the most part, hardworking and competent farmers depending as they do primarily on agriculture for their living. Fate has not treated them very kindly, having so arranged matters that the areas with the most tillable land have the smallest rainfall. The absence of rain is compensated for in some places by the presence of water-courses which, though dry for most of the year, become flooded during the late summer and autumn when there is, normally, heavy rain in the hills. These flood waters have, in Lahej and in Abiyan and in one or two other areas, been harnessed and an irrigation system spreads the water over the land and the valuable cotton and other crops are the result.

The idea of developing the Abiyan plain was conceived by Brian Hartley, the then Director of Agriculture in 1940, when shortage of foodstuff, due to the World War, turned everyone's thoughts to finding alternative local sources of supply which would not be affected by shortage of shipping and the interruption of normal sea communications. Abiyan is a flat open plain triangular in shape with the apex buried in the Yafa hills and the broad base along the shores of the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. It slopes gently from north to south and it is interseted by two large Wadis, the Bana and the Hassan. These two Wadis run far up into the highlands of the Yemen and every summer the seasonal floods come rushing down them as the rain clouds from the Indian Ocean break over the Aulaqi hills. These floods are rich in silt which fertilises the soil on which it is deposited. Hundreds of years ago

241 Hundreds of years ago Aden
133 the value of these silt-laden seasonal floods was realised by the
312 people of the plain, and they initiated an elaborate irrigation
134 system, the remains of which exist to the present day. Years of
926 inter-tribal warfare which benefited no-one, brought the original system to ruin and the land went out of cultivation and the silt-laden waters rushed unimpeded headlong to the sea to discolour the ocean for many miles.

654 Hartley started with a modest capital of £10,000 granted
312 by His Majesty's Government for the purchase of seed grain
241 and for the hiring of bullocks to build dams and till the ground;
648 and with this modest sum he was able to bring 700 acres under
[926] cultivation. The tribes were loath to give up what had become their battle-field, and their silly futile squabbles interrupted Hartley's efforts until the patience of the Aden Government was exhausted and measures were taken to enforce security in the area.

648 Once the World War was over, food production was no
654 longer of paramount importance, and with the economic
248 future of the area in mind long staple Egyptian cotton cultiva-
178 tion was successfully introduced, and by an Administrative Order of my predecessor, an organisation known as the Abiyan Board was set up to manage the whole agricultural project. Additional capital to the extent of £270,000 was obtained as a loan from His Majesty's Government and there was rapid development, so that by the time I became Governor several thousand acres were under cotton cultivation. The Board directed the agricultural policy of the area, was responsible for pest control, owned and operated the heavy agricultural machinery necessary for the economic working of the land, owned and operated two cotton ginning factories, controlled the distribution of flood water through the irrigation canals and channels, and was responsible for the shipping and marketing of the cotton crop.

648 In spite of the changed circumstances of the Board they continued to function by virtue of the original Administrative Order. All efforts by my predecessor to regularise the position by persuading the Fadli and Lower Yafa States, within whose territories Abiyan is situated, to enact decrees failed owing to

new displacing the old is an inevitable process and provided it is done at a reasonable pace need not be disturbing and is often imperceptible. It is the speed of change which matters, and that is what caused the trouble in the Protectorate. In England the change from horse-drawn transport to motor transport took twenty years or more and there was ample time for readjustment. In Aden it took as many days from the time a new major road was open to motor traffic, and the unemployed camel men sat nursing their rifles and wondering how to prevent their animals and themselves from starving. It was not long before they noticed the weapon in their hands and commenced to use it to drive the lorries off the roads. The State and Political Authorities intervened before too much damage was done and negotiations resulted in agreements which restricted the use of lorries to named kinds of merchandise, and so time was gained for readjustment.

The Eastern Aden Protectorate was more affected than the Western by road development and on more than one occasion troops had to be used to persuade the camel men and their friends to be sensible and not to interfere with the lorry traffic which might have had very serious consequences. The Wadi Hadhramaut, that vast cut through the limestone plateau of the Jöl filled with palm groves and white-walled towns, peopled by the most astute and the hardest business men in the world, was subject to droughts which twice in living memory had led to famine: the reason for this had been that the whole irrigation system depended on the availability of bullocks to draw water from the shallow wells and when, during the droughts, the corn crops had failed, the animals had either to be fed on seed grain or be left to die of starvation; in the former case it meant that when the rains did come, there was no seed to sow, in the latter that there were no animals to draw water. The solution was to eliminate the dependence on bullocks and make available to farmers and date garden owners small diesel pumps with which to irrigate their land. They paid cash for the pumps if they could, or if they couldn't they put down a deposit and paid the balance in monthly instalments. A maintenance service, based on a central workshop, which had been set

S:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1938) 1940 MM1 Aden MM1

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ANNUAL REPORT ON THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE COLONY OF ADEN FOR 1938

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I. GEOGRAPHY, CLIMATE AND HISTORY

Geography

131 The Colony of Aden is situated on the south coast of Arabia and is bounded on the seaward side by the Gulf of Aden and on the landward side by the Aden Protectorate. It comprises :—

101 361 133 (a) The peninsula, an extinct volcano in the crater of which lies the old town of Aden which is the main commercial and residential centre of the Colony. On the north shore is the modern harbour suburb of Tawahi, adjacent to which is an area usually referred to as Steamer Point, a large part of which is leased in perpetuity to the Air Ministry with the exceptions of the areas occupied by Government House, the Eastern Telegraph Company's buildings and the Political Secretary's house. To the North of Tawahi lies the dhow harbour and the village of Maala.

(b) The isthmus known as Khormaksar.

(c) An area of land enclosing the modern harbour and extending north and west to the Little Aden Peninsula. The villages of Sheikh Othman, Hiswa, Imad and Buraikha and

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Fakum, the last two on the Little Aden Peninsula, are situated in this area.

(*d*) The island of Perim.

Description

The Aden Peninsula is high, rocky and of volcanic formation; Jabel Shamsan, its summit, is 1,725 feet (525 m.) high and there are some turreted peaks close to it. The harbour lies westward and north-west of the peninsula. Crater, the main Arab town, is situated at a distance of five miles from the modern harbour and lies in the crater of the extinct volcano on the east of the peninsula.

The isthmus is a flat sandy plain which is barely ½ mile wide at its narrowest point near the peninsula. Cultivation occurs at Sheikh Othman in the form of a large vegetable and fruit garden belonging to the Aden Settlement, but except during the cold weather months produce is very limited. There are also privately-owned date palms there.

Hiswa has several groves of palms, but with these exceptions there is no regular cultivation in the Colony.

Perim

Perim Island, situated in the Straits of Bab-el-Mandab, is bare, rocky and rather flat in appearance; its highest point, about a mile northward of its southern extremity, is 214 feet (65 m.) high. The surface of the island is grooved with dry water courses and covered with coarse grass and stunted shrubs, the subsoil being sand and conglomerate coral. Perim Harbour and False Bay, a small shoal light, lie on the southern side of the island. Perim was at one time of importance as a coaling station, and the Eastern Telegraph Company and Lloyd's were represented there. There are now no commercial concerns on the island.

Climate

There is a third-class meteorological observatory in Aden under the superintendence of the Medical Officer in charge of the European General Hospital. The minimum day temperature recorded was 69·1 in February, 1938, and the maximum was 101·5 in July, 1938. The rainfall totalled 1·59 centimetres. Hot sandy winds prevailed as usual during the south-west monsoon. There are no crops in Aden, which depends on supplies from other countries, principally India and the interior.

The climate of Aden from October to April, i.e., during the north-east monsoon, is cool and pleasant, especially from November to February. During the south-west monsoon, i.e. in July and August, strong winds prevail which give some relief from the damp airless heat of May, June and September. Sandstorms are apt to occur in the months of May, June, July and August. These come from a northerly direction usually a short time before sunset and are often

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DESCRIPTION.

The Aden peninsula is high, rocky and of volcanic formation; Jebel Shamsan, its summit, is 1,725 feet (525 m.) high and there are some turreted peaks close to it. The harbour lies westward and north-west of the peninsula. Dwelling-houses and shops are constructed on the ridges of the mountain and in the valleys between them where the ground is normally level. Crater, the main and original town, is situated at a distance of five miles from the modern harbour and lies in the extinct volcano on the east of the peninsula.

The isthmus is a flat sandy plain on which has been laid out the aerodrome and lines of the Royal Air Force, the Naval wireless station, the Aden Protectorate Levy lines, and the golf course. Owing to lack of building space at Tawah, dwelling-houses for senior Government officials have recently been constructed here. It is only 1,320 yards wide at its narrowest point near the peninsula. Cultivation occurs at Sheikh Othman in the form of a large vegetable and fruit garden belonging to the Aden Settlement. There are also privately-owned date palms there.

Hiswa has several groves of palms, but with these exceptions there is no regular cultivation in the Settlement.

PERIM.

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Climate.

There is a third-class meteorological observatory in Aden under the superintendence of the Medical Officer in charge of the European General Hospital. The maximum day temperature recorded was 100·3 in June, and the minimum was 68·1 in December. The rainfall totalled 8 centimetres. Hot sandy winds prevail as usual during the south-west monsoon. There are no crops in Aden, which depends on supplies from other countries, principally India and the interior.

The climate of Aden from October to April, i.e. during the north-west monsoon, is cool and pleasant, especially from November to February. During the south-west monsoon, i.e. from June to September, a hot sandy wind known as Shimal prevails on the peninsula, but on its western side the breezes are

5:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-2(1947)-1949 MM1 Aden MM1

PART III

Chapter 1 : Geography and Climate

THE Colony of Aden is situated in latitude 12° 47′ N. and longitude 45° 10′ E., about 100 miles east of the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb on the southern coast of Arabia. It comprises: 131

(*a*) The Peninsula on which are situated the main town known as Crater, the modern harbour suburb known as Tawahi, adjacent to which is an area leased by the Township Authority to the Air Ministry for Royal Air Force and military purposes, and known collectively as Steamer Point but more particularly by the name of the spurs of Jebel Shamsan, on which buildings have been constructed, and lastly the Dhow Harbour and village of Maala.

(*b*) The isthmus known as Khormaksar.

(*c*) An area of land enclosing the modern harbour and extending north and west to the Little Aden Peninsula. The villages of Sheikh Othman, Hiswa, Imad, Buraikha and Fukum (the last two on the Little Aden Peninsula) are situated in this area. 351

(*d*) The island of Perim.

The Aden Peninsula is high, rocky and of volcanic formation; Jebel Shamsan, its summit, is 1,725 feet high, and there are some turreted peaks close to it. The harbour lies to the westward and north-west of the Peninsula. Dwelling-houses and shops are constructed on the ridges of the mountain and in the valley between them where the ground is normally level. Crater, the main and original town, is situated at a distance of five miles from the modern harbour, and lies in the extinct volcano on the east of the Peninsula. 133 361

The isthmus is a flat, sandy plain on which have been laid out the aerodrome and lines of the Royal Air Force, the Aden Protectorate Levy Lines, the Singapore Lines and the golf course. It is only 1,320 yards wide at its narrowest point near the Peninsula. Cultivation occurs at Sheikh Othman in the form of a large vegetable and fruit-garden belonging to the Township Authority. There are also privately owned date-palms there. 211 215

Hiswa has several groves of palms, but with these exceptions there is no regular cultivation in the Colony.

Salt is manufactured in large quantities on the flat shores of the bay, by the process of solar evaporation. 317

Perim Island, situated in the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, is bare, rocky 133

Brit. Colonial Office G-3 (1947) 1949 MMI Aden MM1

and rather flat in appearance; its highest point, about a mile northward of its southern extremity, is 214 feet high. The surface of the island is grooved with dry water-courses and covered with coarse grass and stunted shrubs, the sub-soil being sand and conglomerate coral. Perim Harbour and False Bay, a small shoal-light, lie on the southern side of the island. It possesses a good small harbour on the south-west side, with an entrance 860 yards in breadth, and an emergency landing-ground on the north side.

The climate of Aden Colony is not unhealthy, though the heat and humidity are trying between April and October. During the north-east monsoon—that is, between the latter part of October and April—the climate is generally cool and pleasant. During the south-west monsoon—that is, in July and August—strong winds prevail which give some relief from the damp airless heat of May, June and September. Sandstorms are apt to occur in the months of June, July and August. These come from a northerly direction, usually a short time before sunset, and are often very intense, though of short duration. The weather during July and August is frequently very hazy, and it is not uncommon for ships to pass quite close to Aden without picking up the land.

The rainfall is extremely scanty, and in some years non-existent, but as much as 8 inches have been known to fall in a year.

Chapter 2: History

Aden has been a place of importance historically owing to its possession of the only good harbour situated on the main ocean trade-route between Egypt and India and to the fact that it is easily defensible. Before the discovery of the Cape route in the fifteenth century, the trade followed much the same course as the main trade-route between the East and the West does to-day, across the Indian Ocean to Aden, thence up the Red Sea and across Egypt to the Mediterranean. There can be little doubt that in Roman and earlier times Aden was a port of considerable significance, although its relative importance compared with other towns on the Arabian coast is not at present known. The discovery of the Cape route at the end of the sixteenth century diverted the major portion of the trade from the old Red Sea route, and in consequence the port of Aden declined. Aden was attacked by the Portuguese in 1513 and 1516, captured by the Turks in 1538 and remained in their hands about 100 years, when the Yemen Arabs rebelled and drove the Turks out; Aden thus came under the Imams of Sana, who never have renounced their claim to it. In 1728 the Sultan of Lahej, the ruler of the territory adjacent to Aden, revolted and established his independence, and included Aden in his Sultanate.

The decline of Aden continued until its capture by the British in 1839, when its village consisted of 600 inhabitants. Financial negotiations with the Sultan of Lahej having failed, the plundering of an Indian ship

6:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1948) 1950 M3A1 Aden MM1

of Aden as a bunkering port for supplies of coal and oil ensures frequent shipping opportunities. The salient features of the import trade are repeated in the export figures, as the bulk of imports are re-exported. The principal business is in skins, hides, coffee, cotton piece-goods, cotton yarns, dates, grain, pulse and flour, sugar, tea, spices, oils, tobacco, gum, shells and salt.

The entrepôt trade is in the hands of large merchants, European, Indian and Arab.

Chapter 6: Production

SALT

The principal native product of Aden is salt, made from sea-water by solar evaporation in a series of pans 3,682 acres in extent. The export in 1948 amounted to 261,361 tons.

This industry is in the hands of four manufacturers, one Italian, under the management of the Custodian of Enemy Property, and three Indian. The year 1948 showed a considerable improvement in production as compared with the previous two years. The tonnage produced during the last five years is given below:

Year	Quantity of salt produced in tons
1944	205,308
1945	139,945
1946	113,042
1947	194,549
1948	271,108

FISHERIES

The coast of the Colony proper extends for approximately 16 sea miles as the crow flies, but is much indented. The bottom shelves steadily to around 50 fathoms 10 miles offshore, beyond which it falls sharply to over 100 fathoms.

In general the fishing is not to be compared with that of the Eastern Aden Protectorate. During the South-West Monsoon, however, an easterly migration of shoals of large pelagic fish occurs and, while these are in the vicinity, heavy landings may take place. During the summer of 1948 this fishery was well below average. For the remainder of the year, migratory fish occur spasmodically and the location of shoals calls for skill and experience.

Bottom fish are few and small except on certain rocky patches where handlines and basket traps achieve good results.

There are approximately 1,300 fishermen whose homes are in the Colony. Many of them migrate with the fish shoals along the Protectorate coast and, when fish are abundant at Aden, Protectorate fishermen come to fish in the Colony.

S.Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1948) 1950 M341 Aden M.M.

PART III

Chapter 1: Geography and Climate

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(b) The Isthmus known as Khormaksar.

(c) An area of land enclosing the modern harbour and extending north and west to the Little Aden Peninsula. The villages of Sheikh Othman, Hiswa, Imad, Buraikha and Fukum (the last two on the Little Aden Peninsula) are situated in this area.

(d) The island of Perim.

133 361 The Aden Peninsula is rugged, rocky and of volcanic formation; Jebel Shamsan, its summit, is 1,775 feet high, and there are some turreted peaks close to it. The harbour lies to the westward and north-west of the Peninsula. Dwelling-houses and shops are constructed on the ridges of the mountain and in the valley between them where the ground is normally level. Crater, the main and original town, is situated at a distance of five miles from the modern harbour, and lies in the extinct volcano on the east of the Peninsula.

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Hiswa has several groves of palms, but with these exceptions there is no regular cultivation in the Colony.

317 Salt is manufactured in large quantities on the flat shores of the bay, by the process of solar evaporation.

133 504 Perim Island, situated in the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, is bare, rocky and rather flat in appearance; its highest point, about a mile northward of its southern extremity, is 214 feet high. The surface of the island is grooved with dry water-courses and covered with coarse grass and stunted shrubs, the sub-soil being sand and conglomerate coral. Perim Harbour

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8:Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1951-52)1954 M341 Aden MM1

Chapter 6: Production

SALT

258 There are four salt works, which are owned by private companies.
439 Export of salt to India has been discontinued as India is now producing almost all the salt it needs. Japan is still buying large quantities at competitive prices. The tonnage produced during the two years is as follows:

Year	*Tons*
1951 . .	304,302
1952 . .	376,079

FISHERIES

Fishing Areas and Methods

133 The Colony coast extends for approximately 16 sea miles in a straight line but is heavily indented with rocky bays and sandy beaches. Fish-
226 ing is almost totally coastal and shoals of small fish are caught in the shallow waters of the inner harbour. The only deep-sea fishing carried out is just inside the 100-fathom line on rocky heads in the otherwise sandy bottom at distances up to 16 miles from the coast. No inland fisheries exist because of the arid geography of the Colony.

226 Fishing methods are mostly ancient having been handed down
501 through generations of fishermen. Dugout canoes from 9 feet to 30 feet long and sewn or nailed planked surf boats (sambuks) up to 35 feet long are the principal fishing craft. The small canoes (houris) are fished by one man with handline for rock fish and trolling for migratory shoaling fish. The larger houris are used by a crew of three or four with cotton nets for shoals of a type of mackerel, and with handlines on the rocky coast. In addition, beach seines and rectangular bottom set nets are set by this type of craft. The surf boats are mostly used during the summer months with a crew of eleven using encircling gill nets, and during the months of March, April and May for deep-sea hand lining.

Principal methods used are hand lines, trolling lines, fine cotton gill nets, a form of encircling gill triangular net in cotton or heavy Indian twine, a rectangular bottom set net with leader, lift nets and various tangle and beach seine nets.

Organisation

226 The fishing industry is split into net and line fishermen. The latter
426 are mostly self-supporting and generally take their own fish to market. The net fishermen are almost all completely indebted to substantial salt fish exporters who advance money to the captain (*nakhooda*) of

S.Gt. Brit., Colonial Office G-3 (1951-52)1954 M541 Aden MM

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10

Aden Colony and Protectorate

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

Aden Colony and the tribal states comprising the Aden Protectorate have a long and varied history, but they have been under the influence of Great Britain for over a century. The Colony of Aden consists of two small peninsulas, located about 100 miles east of the straits of Bab el Mandeb, the short strip of connecting mainland, Perim Island at the entrance to the Red Sea, and the small offshore islands of Kuria Muria to the east. It became a British dependency in 1839, but remained under the jurisdiction of India until constituted a Crown Colony in 1937. Exclusive of the islands, the Colony has an area of about 75 square miles, 21 square miles of which comprise the peninsula of Aden proper. The historic settlement is located on a rocky promontory, 1 to 6 miles in width and 2 to 4 miles in length, which is connected with the mainland by a narrow isthmus. It is an

p. 235(a)

G3 Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1952) 1954
M1 Middle East
ADEN 1941
HADHRAMAUT 1944

A 183 extinct volcano with a broad crater which is surrounded on three sides by peaks rising to over 1,800 feet, while the fourth side slopes gradually to the sea. Kamaran Island, important as an international quarantine station until 1951, is administered independently under the Colony.

M 131 The Aden Protectorate has an approximate area of 112,000 square miles, with a coastline of about 740 miles, extending from Ras Murad, at the entrance to the Red Sea, to Ras Dharbat 'Ali, which marks the frontier with Muscat and Oman. It is bounded on the northwest by the Kingdom of the Yemen, on the east by the Dhofar country under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Muscat, on the north by the desert of Rub' al Khali, the so-called "Empty Quarter" of Arabia, and on the south by the Gulf of Aden. The Protectorate is a composite of independent sultanates and tribal confederations, the rulers and the chiefs of which

M 492 498

p. 295(6)